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MRS. E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH AND HER COTTAGE.

By SARAH M. HUDDLESON, M.D.

(Read before the Society, April 22, 1919.)

In this, the centennial anniversary year of the birth of Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth, it is a fitting and graceful tribute that the Columbia Historical Society pays the gifted authoress, to meet in her honor this evening. Mrs. Southworth is the city's pioneer novelist. She was also perhaps, the most prolific writer of fiction in America for nearly fifty years.

"The pen *is* mightier than the sword!" for the sword is for warfare, and the results of the sword-in-action are quick, sharp and arbitrary. The pen is an emblem of peace times: the pen is an educator: the results of the pen are as lasting as our libraries; the penned thoughts are as lasting as the eternal hills on which our libraries are established. The output of the pen goes into history; history is as lasting as time—and nothing yet has beaten time—except eternity!

Mrs. Southworth belongs to our national capital. Here she was born; here she lived; here she wrote and wielded her power that helped to make the city famous; here she died; and beneath the oak trees of beautiful Oak Hill she rests her last rest.

She was a great authoress, a loyal friend, a loving mother and a devout christian.

Mrs. Southworth's ancestors were of French and English descent and were in religious belief, Roman Catholic and Episcopalian. Some of them accompanied Leonard Calvert, the first Lord Baltimore, to America in 1632; and they helped to found old St. Mary's, the

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*With deepest trust-lore
E. D. A. Smith*

first settlement in Maryland and one of the most historical. These first settlers became landed proprietors, and helped to shape the future of one of the original thirteen states.

Mrs. Southworth, on her mother's side, was descended from Sir Charles Grenfeldt, a knight at the Court of James I, of England. Her American forefathers were conspicuous in the War of the American Revolution; they were among the first to take up arms, and among the last to be mustered out; their names have been honored in the annals of our country.

Having had the great pleasure of personally knowing Mrs. Southworth, it has been a gratification to meet a number of her relatives. These people are to be found in various parts of the country, and wherever they may be, one is sure to find gentlemen and gentlewomen, persons well-informed, quiet, unostentatious, capable, kindly disposed, and accustomed to the best that life holds dear: their households are well ordered and their children are universally civil, attentive and charming.

An inquirer from Indiana is curious to know *why* Mrs. Southworth's initials spell "Eden," and thinks it must mean some special charm or precedent. To this question I replied: "Mrs. Southworth is the daughter of Capt. Charles LeCompte Nevitte and his second wife, Susannah Wailes, the latter from St. Mary's County, Md. When little Emma Nevitte was about five years of age, her father passed away, and by the bedside of this dying father, she was christened, at his request, by Father Lucas of St. Peter's Parish, Capitol Hill, "Emma-Dorothy-Eliza-Nevitte," hence the blessed charm of the name "E.D.E.N."

Capt. Nevitte was a devout Catholic and his wife was an equally fervent Episcopalian, and to their credit, Mrs. Southworth records, they had no quarrel concerning religious differences, each being broadly catholic in view and always considerate of the other.

Susannah Wailes was Captain Nevitte's second wife; at the time of their marriage he was forty-five and his wife but a girl of fifteen. A veritable union of autumn and springtime. Mrs. Southworth was the elder of their two daughters.

Fortunately for us, Mrs. Southworth has gone on record and has given us a little insight into her life at this period. I find the record in a book entitled "Women of the South."

"Here I was born" says Mrs. Southworth (referring to the old Hillman House on North Capitol Street) "in the very room designed to be tenanted by General George Washington.

"I was a child of sorrow from the very first year of my life. Thin and dark, I had no beauty except a pair of large, wild eyes—but even this was destined to be tarnished. At twelve-months, I was attacked by an inflammation of the eyes that ended in total blindness—though happily temporary. Thus it was, my first view of life was through a dim, mysterious cathedral light in which every object in the world looked larger, vaguer, more distant and more imposing than it really was.

"Among the friends around me, the imposing form and sympathetic face of my dear grandmother, made the deepest impression.

"At three years of age, my sight began to clear. And about this time my only sister was born; a beautiful child with fair and rounded form, rosy complexion, soft blue eyes and golden hair that in after years became a bright chestnut. She was of a lively, social, loving nature, and as she grew, she won all hearts around her—parents, cousins, nurses, servants, and all who had been wearied to death with such a weird little elf as myself.

"I was attached to my father, but he was often from home for months at a time, and all my life at that time was divided into two periods, when he was home and when he was gone; and every event dated from one or two epochs—joyfully 'Since my father came home,' sadly, 'Since father went away.' "

Mrs. Southworth's father was an extensive importer, a merchant in Alexandria, Virginia: an owner of a fleet of ships—and this about the time General Washington was first president of the United States. Alexandria at that day was a busy commercial market and so also was historic old Georgetown. The Dutch East India Company sent its trading-ships here laden with silks, jewels and merchandise from the Orient; the harbor was fine, and in the days of water traffic, prior to the busy, intruding advent of the railroads, it is said New York and Philadelphia looked with envious eyes on these two busy little trading-ports, so advantageously located, directly between the North and the South, that absorbed the sea-trade from three directions. It seems strange now, but there are pictures extant, of the busy little port of Georgetown, with wharfage almost to Eastern Branch, and boats from everywhere.

Uncle Sam's international early troubles with France and later with England, cost Captain Nevitte his fleet of ships, and his fortune thereby went into "embarrassing entanglement." He did not let the state of his finances dim his patriotism. He led a company of troops in the War of 1812, and received a chest wound which caused unremitting suffering, and was the ultimate cause of his death a dozen years later.

"Year after year" Mrs. Southworth continued her narration, "from my eighth to my sixteenth year, I grew more lonely, retired into myself more, until notwithstanding a strong, ardent, demonstrative temperament, I became cold, reserved and abstracted.

"Let me pass over in silence the stormy and disastrous days of my wretched girlhood and womanhood, days that stamped upon my brow of youth the furrows of fifty years."

But Providence surely shapes destinies; and "out of darkness cometh light." Certainly there was no better field for a novelist-in-the-making than existed

in Mrs. Southworth's early environment. She was born in the nation's capital in the only home in the city owned by Gen. George Washington. This home our first President designed for himself for the evening-time of his life, but he passed away before he could occupy the building. And Mrs. Southworth first saw the light of day in the very room which the General had designed to be his own. In later years, as the city grew, that house on North Capitol Street became a hotel and was long known as the Hillman House and later as the Kenmore: the building was demolished about fifteen years ago to make part of the space for the Union Station Plaza. Having been born in the very shadow of the capitol of the world's greatest republic and in the home of our first President, little Emma was making a good start. Added to that, she came almost as a Christmas present, having made her advent into this great world on the 26th of December, 1819.

"People born in December," according to the foreshadowing of the horologist, "are frank, progressive and usually great favorites. They are always in a hurry: impatient and cannot bear to wait. They are practical, resourceful, artistic, musical, genial and quick to forgive. They are honest and conscientious; impulsive, sanguine, sunny. They are often nervous and seldom take enough rest. They are healthy and live long. They are lucky in money affairs." I leave those who knew Mrs. Southworth so well, to place the stamp of approval on so much of this summary as applies to her characteristics.

She was truly "a lady to the manor born." Her tastes were simple, her home was dainty, and she was never guilty of extravagance. Her head was not turned by the homage paid her by the world's romantic public. She was a woman of worth and did much for her city and her country.

The Cottage in which she dwelt is a quaint, romantic old place, and when I first saw it, it was three blocks from any car-line; and although she resided in that Cottage for most of her literary life, many years must have elapsed before there was a car-line near it at all. Now there seems to be "too much car-line." It fights for supremacy to the very doorstep of the Cottage.

It may be said Mrs. Southworth "grew up with the capital city." The White House was less than fifteen years old when she was born: and as there were four ex-Presidents of the United States alive as early as 1824,—John Quincy Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and James Monroe—she must have either have seen or have known every President of the United States from John Quincy Adams to Major McKinley. She saw the City of Washington grow! When she first knew it, it was a large rambling town of some ten thousand inhabitants—with dwellings remote from each other—truly a town of "magnificent distances!" At the time of her demise, the city contained a population of something like 350,000 souls. There were probably about 7,000 buildings in the city when she first saw it, many of them merely temporary affairs; when she passed away, our city contained more than 85,000 buildings of which more than 65,000 were of brick. In summarizing—for the 80 years of her life—the city averaged nearly a thousand buildings a year. The coal oil lamp and the baseburner stove were in the height of their success when she began to write,—and yet, her beloved Cottage is heated by a furnace and is lighted by electricity, so well did she keep pace with the times!

There were fewer Cabinet officers in her early days than there are now; the U. S. Treasury was a very new building when she was a child. She must have seen the corner stone of the Washington Monument

laid, and of course witnessed its completion many years later. She knew the Smithsonian grounds long before the Smithsonian Institution was erected, and long before the grounds were treated as a park by a landscape architect; they were outlying "commons" when she first knew them: the Department of Agriculture was not builded until long years after she became famous. She must have seen the first shovel-full of dirt taken out of what is now the old Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, on that illustrious Fourth of July so many years ago, by the then President of the United States, at the opening ceremonies for projected transportation. That canal that would have played such an important part in our nation's history had not the invention of the steam railway distanced and outshone it! She was famous long years before the first steam engine was heard west of the Alleghanies. And yet—she wasn't so aged! Ours is a country that makes history rapidly.

In 1840 she was united in marriage to Frederick H. Southworth of Utica, N. Y. A few years later there was a separation and she was thrown upon her own resources, or, as she expressed it: "Broken in spirit, health and purse—a widow by fate but not by fact—with my two babes looking up to me for the support I could not give." Husbandless, homeless and without means of support! Fate could hardly have dealt her a harder blow. All this at a time in our history when cultured women were supposed to remain at home and "looky pretty"! At a time when it was thought mercenary for women to think of employment in terms of money: an age when it was exceedingly unpopular for a woman to seem so bold as to desire to earn a livelihood, no matter how urgent the need for it may have been. It was almost a quarter of a century before the time when large numbers of women accepted

positions in factories and stores; it was a quarter of a century before woman's commercial emancipation through the aid of the Remington typewriter, stenography and other gainful occupations. The public schools of the country—then in their infancy—probably offered to unprotected, impoverished women of education and refinement, the very first acceptable, gainful occupation. In that early day public schools were few, and the school system, I fancy, was in somewhat of an experimental stage. She taught school: but it is recorded that she received the rather inadequate sum of \$250 a year—and early in her official career winter came on, and Congress had failed to make the necessary appropriations for the school! The free schools of this city must have been a great perplexity to the "City Fathers" in those early days! It seems the first of our city schools were established by the voluntary contributions of public-spirited citizens. It is recorded that Thomas Jefferson, prior to 1824, contributed \$200 for this first free-school venture; this was considered a princely donation at that day: and for his generosity, as well as for the privilege of his name on the subscription roll, the Jefferson School in the Southwest part of the city was named in his honor. This building, I am told, was the largest edifice of its kind in the United States, when it was builded, which I take to have been about 1851. A frame building, for school purposes stood near this site for many years previous to this date; and Mrs. Southworth became a teacher in the city schools about 1843. The frame building was known as the Fourth District school. The city was mapped into four school districts about 1840, and these districts conformed to the dividing lines of the city—North, East, South and West. To the Fourth District school Mrs. Southworth came as an assistant teacher. She carried into her school work the same courage,

energy and enthusiasm which later she put into a literary career that placed her in the front ranks as a novelist. She was considered an excellent teacher, for she was extremely fond of her work, and she dearly loved children. Many of Washington's older business men were successfully started in the rudiments of education by her. It is thought the Ashfords, Admiral Robley D. Evans, S. S. Shedd and other prominent personages of this city were among them.

Mrs. Southworth became an assistant teacher in the Girls' Grammar Department in 1844; and later, upon the organization of additional primary schools in the city, she voluntarily chose one of them and taught acceptably, the younger generation, for five years.

About 1841 she is said to have lived in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. That was at a time before the Mississippi River had been bridged, and before there were any railroads to the west of it, and at a time when "the Great Inland Empire" beyond the "Father of Waters" was known as the "Northwest Territory," a space which many of the senators of that day considered as a boundless wilderness fit only for the abode of Indians and wild animals. That was at least fifteen years before the City of Minneapolis was located, and at the time of Mrs. Southworth's death, not only that city but many other cities in the West had grown to be populous metropolises with an average of more than 350,000 inhabitants each. The West, at the time Mrs. Southworth was there, was probably too new, and had not the advantages she desired; for she was soon in the National Capital again.

HOW SHE BEGAN TO WRITE.

By this time most of Mrs. Southworth's relatives were dead and their fortunes gone. Those were dark days for her. One Christmas eve, as she sat by the

fireside in her little home at 13th and C Streets S.W., she relates that she felt very lonely and discouraged. Suddenly, one of the old traditions of St. Mary's, Md., came into her mind—and with her ever generous thought of helping others, she began to wonder if the story would not be interesting if written and printed. She wondered if it would not be helpful to Dr. Snodgrass, editor and proprietor of the *Baltimore Saturday Visitor*? This was in the dark days when the clouds of the Civil war began to lower. Already the people were “taking sides.” Dr. Snodgrass, with a northern policy, was publishing his paper in a southern city! The discord soon caused him to suspend publication of *The Visitor*.

But on this Christmas eve, Mrs. Southworth reflected that his paper needed copy, and she thought that particular tradition of old St. Mary's would look well in print. The story was *The Irish Refugee*. She wrote it to beguile away the hours of the otherwise solitary evening, and she *hoped* it would be helpful to Dr. Snodgrass, and that he would accept it! “If he did not,” she reflected, she would “never have the heart to write another.”

The story was graciously accepted and promptly published; the editor sent her a kind note expressing his gratitude, and encouraged the writer to persevere. This tiny note of thanks was a new epoch in her life; it inspired hope and gave her courage and confidence. It was a wise Providence that inspired that editor to be kind; even in the hurried rush of business affairs one never knows when one may be “entertaining an angel unawares.” To the perspicacity of Dr. Snodgrass, not only Washington, but the world, is indebted for that kindness that led Mrs. Southworth to her rightful vocation of authorship. Such seemingly trivial incidents have started many a great man or woman on the right road to success. One of our greatest Americans said

he would have been the janitor of a school-building, had not the right event at the right time started him on the road to success, hitherto uneven by him.

Mrs. Southworth generously wrote other short stories for the *Baltimore Saturday Visitor*; then came a longer and a more ambitious one entitled "The Wife's Victory." This story was set in type and the forms locked, ready to go to press, when the *Visitor* suspended publication. In fact the paper was "absorbed" by the Washington *National Era*, with Dr. Gamaliel Bailey as publisher. The editor of *The Visitor* called attention of the editor of *The Era* to the value of the story, and strongly recommended its publication: Dr. Bailey, after reviewing the story, highly recommended it to his readers. The story was extensively copied in his exchange list, and was everywhere received with unstinted praise, which verified his good judgment.

Mrs. Southworth was writing all this time, through generosity and "for the good of her soul." She "wrote from heart and brain" she said, "just to please her friends." And all the while the wolf was howling on her doorstep. She has said that in her darkest hours of trouble, her brightest stories came to her.

She sent other manuscripts at once to *The Era*, such as "The Wife's Mistake," "The Thunderbolt," "The Neighbor's Prescription," and other short stories, but received no monetary compensation for them. And while

"We cannot make bargains for blisses
Nor catch them like fishes in nets,
Oftimes the things our life misses
Help more than the thing that it gets."

The sun of prosperity rises slowly. It would have perhaps been an unwise Providence that thrust her suddenly into the noonday of Fame: Fate is so careful of a celebrity in-the-making. She could not afford to

write, she thought, without remuneration, and so she gave up the pen for the needle. For weary months she spent her evening hours stitching away at repairing and remodeling the winter wardrobes of her two children. But *Fate* was with her! One great author has said: "So careful of the *type* is she, that she is careless of the *individual*." A thousand men might attempt to ford a stream and be drowned, merely to make a footbridge of bodies over which the true type of individual might pass in safety! In the losses and crosses, and the slow preparation for her life work, there were many gray days and blue days for the distraught little widow, but *no* red letter days! The Valley of Trial is long before emerging into the lime-light of Success. The God of our Fathers had not deserted her. Fortune came her way at last. And I am glad she put the incident on record: "One tempestuous afternoon," she relates, "when snow and sleet came down together, I was waiting in the school-room long after hours, for a little negro girl to bring me an umbrella. My spirits were deeply depressed, for the school funds were exhausted, my salary was unpaid, and there seemed no hope for the future; winter was coming on, and I had no resources."

She was revolving these matters in her mind, while automatically watching the driving tempest—when—suddenly—a carriage drove up to the old Fourth School (Jefferson)—Dr. Bailey got out of that carriage, ran up the front steps and put into her hand the compensation for her former writings—the first money she had earned by the pen. He told her that his readers had missed her writings from the columns of *The Era*, and he besought her to write another short story—and he was gone before she could recover from her surprise sufficiently to thank him! "What a mile-post on the Road to Fame" say you? Ah! no! Things

are not always what they seem. The Road to Fame lies through the Village of Despair, and the road is long and dreary; that mother-heart and mind simply continued on that reverie concerning the wherewithal to meet exigencies; she was, she says, at that moment, thinking—*not* of her sunshiny future—but was mentally figuring how much warm flannels and baby socks that money would buy!

However, true to her promise, that evening she began a story, later published in book form, which she called "Sybil Brotherton." It was a tale intended to be completed in one number of *The Era*, but ran through seven editions of the paper—and for this work she received the old-time wage of ten dollars a column.

Near the close of that year, she was transferred from the position of assistant teacher in the Fourth School District to that of principal of the New Primary Department School, a position she personally sought. There being no additional public school houses available at this time for her school, she promptly gave over the two larger rooms on the first floor of her pretty dwelling at the S.E. corner of 13th and C Streets S.W. for this purpose. The city streets could not have been laid out then as they are now, for that dwelling is still standing; it is a barber-shop at the present time, and the sidewalk is flush with the front door, but when she occupied the premises the house was located in the center of a spacious lawn surrounded by beautiful shrubbery, and the roses and other prized flowers bloomed riotously there.

When this New Primary School was started, Mrs. Southworth had eighty pupils under her charge, and was busy one morning organizing her classes—when Dr. Bailey, *The Era's* editor, reappeared. He asked her to write a story for the New Year, as a special feature for his paper. She discussed several subjects,

psychological, philosophical, and practical, that were in her mind—stories that chiefly bore out the sad experiences of her life, and she selected for that story the subject of Moral Retribution, as she understood it. Yes, she would write a short (?) story! But ever since the days of Mother Eve, womankind has been possessed of plenty of words! That story was like the traditional turnip of Mr. Finney, "It grew and it grew," and she thought she *might* finish it in the next edition of *The Era*: then she found she could not finish it in the fourth—nor the fifth—nor the ninth—and finally she wrote "Finis" at the end of the tenth installment.

The story was an instant success and was later copyrighted by *Harper's* of New York, THE leading publishing house in the Western World at that time.

A life-insurance president once observed: "Woman, the world over, would be far in advance in her present financial status, if she were not such a dual purpose creature; but woman, with one hand in the butter and the other in business, is very handicapped." And Mrs. Southworth found herself *very much* handicapped at this time; for she was teaching school, caring for her home, supporting herself and her children, and nursing a desperately sick child back to health—and was, at the same time endeavoring to write this story for the entertainment of the reading public at the coming New Year! Writing a thriller under such circumstances is not easy! For when she taught school her sick child suffered and complained; when she attended her child, the patrons of her school complained: and when she did all of these things successfully, and had merely a few scraps of hours stolen from rest and sleep, in which to write—her publishers complained! So it was an endless chain of grief and pain, consecration and toil. It was that traditional "darkest hour before dawn": it was a test of her worth. She was wearied almost to

death. Much of her manuscript was thrown back on her hands as unworthy; but, ill as she became under the heavy load of burdens she carried, she did not lose her splendid courage. All honor to this little woman who so pluckily and so worthily overcame her difficulties. The sun of success began to dawn. Contrary to medical affirmation, the sick child began to recover; this gave her more time to devote to her school: and when her school ran along without friction, she became so absorbed in writing, in her spare moments, that she temporarily forgot to brood over her grief and sorrow and her life's shipwreck—and by the time she had “found herself,” the scar of Life's tragedies had healed. Her book, published under so many difficulties, also ushered in a new era in literature—that of reprinting in this country, a volume from a serial story primarily published in a newspaper. The fact of its being the first novel by an unknown author ever accepted by the House of *Harper*, gave the book such prestige, that it was at once republished in England and was favorably noted on the continent of Europe. New friends rushed to her home to congratulate her. Offers from literary journals poured in from every side, and she accepted an offer from Mr. Peterson, then editor of the Philadelphia *Saturday Evening Post*, to write for that paper, and it is said her writings alone helped to increase the subscription list from 1,200 to 30,000. Mr. Peterson published her novels in book form and in uniform bindings, and reaped a goodly reward thereby. Here, absorbed in a lifework of authorship, her former days of sorrow were forgotten. One amazing thing is that she was her own amanuensis. Every word of the hundreds of thousands that are contained in her books was painstakingly written in long-hand by herself. She lived before the days of mahogany desks, dictaphones and stenographers. The amount of manual

labor she put into the writing of her books is phenomenal, to say nothing of her brilliancy and continuity of thought. She was marvellous.

To the time she became famous, she had probably never seen a typewriter, had never sent a telegram, had never seen a dictaphone, had never pressed an electric button to call a servant, nor had ever posed for a moving picture. Neither had her contemporaries! She was a lady of the old school; she knew well the dignity and charm of simplicity in life, and as the Reverend Morgan Dix used to say, she had "the grace of patience." I know of no other human being that would undertake alone, a task so gigantic as she accomplished. She wrote with a gold pen; she wrote on foolscap, and typesetters permitted to put her manuscript in type, state that the color of the paper used was sky blue. There is at least one gold finger ring now in existence that was made from the stubs of those gold pens with which she wrote her manuscripts. But Mrs. Southworth was always up-to-date; before her death she wrote on a typewriter, and her Cottage was steam-heated and electric-lighted.

From the *Yonkers, N. Y. Gazette*, September, 1890, we obtained this interview from the talented authoress (an interview probably taken from *The Evening Star*, Washington, D. C.):

"A WOMAN WHO WRITES.

MRS. SOUTHWORTH TELLS ABOUT HER OWN LITERARY WORK.

HOW ROMANCES ARE WOVEN.

"A wonderful woman is Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth; wonderful in her mental capacity and in her power of sustained thought; scarcely less wonderful in her physical make-up.

"She was writing—her hand desk and her chair out on

the porch of her Georgetown home—when the *Star* reporter called the other afternoon to hear this gifted weaver of fact and romance relate some of her professional experiences.

“ ‘So you want me to tell you how I write a novel?’ said Mrs. Southworth, ‘It is a difficult thing to explain the workings of a piece of mechanism with which no one is familiar.’

“ ‘I have no method,’ said Mrs. Southworth. ‘I never did have. I began without knowing I could write a novel. My first story was for the *Washington National Era*, a lengthy story evolved from a small beginning: a story called “Retribution”: for a few former short stories I received fifteen dollars; that was the first earnings by my pen—and I assure you that that money gave me more enjoyment than any thousand dollars I received in later life.’

“ ‘*Retribution* a novel, was published in 1847 by *Harpers*; the first novel of which I know anything, that was ever reprinted in book form from a newspaper or a magazine.’

ALL FOUNDED ON FACTS.

“ ‘Do I need facts for my plots? ALL my novels are founded on facts. To give you a clear idea of how a novel is evolved from small beginnings, I will tell you about the writing of *The Hidden Hand*. It was in the winter of 1857, and at the very last of the year. I was in very bad health. My sister was slowly passing away (tuberculosis). All my surroundings were depressing to the last degree; and yet in the midst of that, my brightest and gayest stories came to me! I happened to see in a New York paper a short paragraph in which it was stated that a little nine-year-old girl, dressed in boy’s clothes, had been arrested. She was homeless and friendless and was sent to some asylum in Westchester County. That was the origin of “Capitola,” and the newspaper item was a seed which lodged in my mind and germinated there. Remembering also the story of a husbandless mother who was discarded by her family and who brought up her unfortunate child (the child a personage who became so well known in Washington later and who did so well)—I founded the birth of “Capitola, the Madcap,” on that fact.

Nearly every adventure of Capitola came from real life. Some of it from incidents in New Orleans and some from scenes along the Mississippi.

WRITING AT NIGHT.

“ ‘In those early days of my authorship, I wrote principally at night. I had to make daily journeys from the extreme west end of Georgetown to the extreme east end of Washington, Capitol Hill, to see my sick sister. That might have done something toward forming my writing habits. I generally wrote from noon until midnight. A German metaphysician has argued that our physical force is greatest between midnight and noon, while our mental vigor and clearness are most pronounced between noon and midnight. That theory I have found to be correct, so far as my experience goes.

“ ‘A spell of serious illness’ (this interview occurred in 1890), ‘has interfered considerably with my work and temporarily changed my practice. Ordinarily, I labor four days each week, constantly, devotedly, scarcely taking time to eat, and I work from noon until midnight.

“ ‘It has always been a real joy to me to look forward to the two days’ holiday—Saturday and Sunday—and I expect to enjoy that uninterrupted pleasure for some time to come,’ she naively replied.”

So much for Mrs. Southworth’s methods. “The Hidden Hand” to which she refers, was one of her most popular novels. A long review of this book is given in *The Bookman*, October, 1916, under the caption: “The Best Sellers of Yesterday.” The tenor of the book is the unseen force that nerves and protects an individual in times of deadly danger—that force that enables Right to triumph over Might and to be on the side of victory.

Note the dramatic beginning of that book:

“Whence is that knocking? How is it with me when every sound appals me? I hear knocking. In the South Entry. Hark! More knocking!

"Hurricane Hall is a large old family mansion built of dark red sandstone in one of the loneliest, wildest mountain ranges of Virginia. The estate is surrounded on three sides by a range of steep, gray rocks, spiked with clumps of dark evergreens, and called from its horse-shoe form, The Devil's Hoof. On the fourth side the ground gradually ascends in the broken rock and the barren soil to the edge of the wild mountain stream known as the Devil's Run.

"When the storms and floods were high, the loud roaring of the wild mountain gorges and the terrific raging of its torrents over its rocky course gave this savage locality its ill-omened names of Devil's Hoof, Devil's Run and Hurricane Hall." . . .

"And thus begins 'The Hidden Hand,' " says *the Bookman*, "one of the famous old thrillers of the fifties, and *most popular serial*, bar none, that ever raced breathless through the pages of the old *New York Ledger*."

It is a story of intrigues, robbers, mysticism and heroism: the story of "Capitola, the Madcap," found its way to all hearts. Our grandfathers and grandmothers acknowledge having lost many hours' sleep while unceasingly reading "The Hidden Hand." You will probably recall one very dramatic incident in that book—THE incident, perhaps, that gave the story such a theatrical run both in this country and the leading countries of Europe. Capitola, you recall, once took the place of an unwilling bride, and went to the altar closely veiled; she being about the size of her girl friend who was about to be married to the conscienceless black-sheep of a well-to-do family. The ceremony began all right, but when the officiating minister asked: "Do you take this man to be your lawful and wedded husband?" Capitola raised her veil and said defiantly, "No!" "No—not if he were the last man and I the last woman on earth and the human race were to become

extinct—and not if the Angel Gabriel came down and asked me to do this—most certainly—No!”

In later years when Mrs. Southworth was invited to visit England in regard to foreign copyrights and the dramatization of her books, she found “The Hidden Hand” being produced by three of the leading theaters in London, each playing to crowded houses, and “Capitola” appeared to have struck the fancy of the tradesmen as well; for there were Capitola hats, Capitola suits, Capitola shoes, Capitola race horses, Capitola boats, and commerce seemed to have appropriated the name “Capitola” for an international trade-mark!

Mrs. Southworth stated that nearly every adventure of her heroine, Capitola, came from real life; another proof that “Truth is stronger than fiction.” And while “The Hidden Hand” was the most generally circulated of all her books, she, herself, preferred her story called “Ishmael.” The character, Ishmael, was a portrait of a well-known man in this city who became famous, and who at first, in his childhood life in Georgetown, was woefully poor and forsaken. It is said the description of this public-spirited citizen was so well drawn that many persons wrote her regarding him. Mrs. Southworth was one of the most successful novelists this country ever produced. Great credit is due to Dr. Gamaliel Bailey, editor of *The Era* for the galaxy of stars he discovered in the literary world. He not only encouraged Mrs. Southworth to write, but both he and Mrs. Southworth encouraged Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, and it was through their united efforts that they encouraged Mrs. Stowe to write “Uncle Tom’s Cabin.”

Southworth Cottage has been visited by many prominent writers. “From the time Robert Bonner stood on the porch of her home, and admired the view along the Potomac, up to the year of her death, many celebrities

in literature, when in the city, paid their respects to the great authoress."

Mrs. Southworth was the friend of the poet Whittier, whom she met in 1847, and who was also an associate editor of *The Era*. She inspired the celebrated poem of Barbara Frietchie, which said:

"Shoot, if you must, this old gray head,
But spare my country's flag instead."

The claim has been disputed by some, but Dr. Richmond J. Southworth, son of the celebrated authoress, has often told of the circumstances that led up to the writing of the poem, and among Mrs. Southworth's effects was found the following letter from the poet, Whittier:

"AMESBURY, 9 Mo. 8, 1863.

"*My Dear Mrs. Southworth:*

"I heartily thank thee for thy very kind letter and its enclosed 'message.' It ought to have fallen into better hands, but I have just written off a little ballad of 'Barbara Frietchie,' which will appear in the next *Atlantic*. If it is good for anything, thee deserves all the credit of it. I wish I could accept thy kind invitation to thy pleasant cottage home, but am too much of an invalid to undertake the journey. I thank thee none the less however, for asking me. I shall go there in imagination, if I cannot otherwise. With best wishes for thy health and happiness, I am most truly thy friend,

(Signed),

JOHN G. WHITTIER."

Mrs. Southworth wrote many short stories and over seventy complete novels. She wrote every word of them in long-hand. It was her custom to work furiously four days a week; to mail her manuscripts at the Georgetown postoffice at 2 o'clock every Friday afternoon. I would like to give a short history of this interesting postoffice and its more interesting postmaster at that

time, but space forbids. Mrs. Southworth kept a special servant, a trusty old Uncle Aleck, an African of the old school, to whom she entrusted the leathern pouch, securely locked, with her precious manuscript; he would present this pouch to the postmaster, who had the duplicate key to the pouch; he would unlock it, mail the manuscript right out to the editor and publisher, and replace it by proof-sheets or other mail, relock the pouch, and pocket the key. Uncle Aleck would carry in safety the return proofs to the authoress. Old Uncle Aleck, together with several other trusted servants, two of whom survived her and are still residents of Georgetown, lived at Prospect Cottage many years. It is said "No man is a hero to his own valet" but Mrs. Southworth was ever the heroine to her lifelong and trusted servants!

Among Mrs. Southworth's most popular books are: "Allsworth Abbey," "A Beautiful Fiend," "A Noble Lord," "Brandon Coyle's Wife," "Broken Pledges," "Cruel as the Grave," "Changed Brides," "Curse of Clifton," "David Lindsay," "Em," "Em's Husband," "Fallen Pride," "Fair Play," "Family Doom," "Fatal Marriage," "From the Depths," "Fatal Secret," "For Woman's Love," "Fortune Seeker," "A Leap in the Dark," "A Skeleton in the Closet," "How He Won Her," "Haunted Homestead," "Hickory Hall," "Ishmael," "India-The Pearl of Pearl-River," "Lost Heiress," "Love's Labor Won," "Lost Heir of Linlithgow," "Little Nea's Engagement," "Lady of the Isle," "Maiden Widow," "Missing Bride," "Lillith," "Mystery of Dark Hollow," "Only a Girl's Heart," "Nearest and Dearest," "Prince of Darkness," "Red Hill Tragedy," "Rejected Bride," "Retribution," "The Discarded Daughter," "The Three Beauties," "Two Sisters," "Tortured Heart," "Tried for Her Life," "The Gypsy's Prophecy," "The Mysterious Marriage," "The Artist's

Love," "The Bridal Eve," "The Widow's Son," "The Bride of Llewellyn," "The Mother-in-law," "Self Raised," "Sybil Brotherton," "The Unloved Wife," "The Wife's Victory," "Unknown," "Victor's Triumph," "Vivia," "The Secret Power," and others.

This is the most tremendous output of any author, unaided, of whom I have the honor to know. She wrote exclusively for the *New York Ledger* for many years, under contract with the late Robert Bonner. Her books ran through copyright editions for nearly fifty years; and I am at a loss to remember how many times the types were worn out and had to be re-set for re-printing; but it was phenomenal. Her writings were translated into French, Spanish, German, and nearly all the languages of Europe. New York, Montreal, Madrid and Melbourne vied with each other for the very latest chapter published. New York, Chicago, and publishing houses of other cities, are still bringing out new editions of her novels: I saw a distinctly new edition in the book-shops a few days ago. Romance never dies. With the keen dramatic force and the wonderful descriptive writing which she put into her stories, her books are still as eagerly read as they were in the days of our grandmothers.

An antiquary in Boston sent me some of her novels at the Christmastide, a part of the Peterson First Edition. I tested the novels on my household. An old gentleman who boasts of being "eighty-six years young," and who remembered many of her stories of long ago, read "The Haunted House" from cover to cover before he would retire for the night; a pretty girl, employed in the Treasury Department, secured the copy of "The Deserted Wife," that evening after dinner, and at one o'clock the next morning she was still reading it! A high-school teacher from New York City secured three of the volumes and staid in the house three days,

reading those books, rather than go sight-seeing; a girl neighbor, whose time was her own, secured the rest of the lot, and read for a week!

I went to the Congressional Library to test the calls there for her books, and found that 30 per cent. of the volumes I called for were "not on the shelf!"

Mrs. Southworth's novels had the widest possible circulation of any romances of her day, through the columns of the *New York Ledger*, and through the various copyright editions. Her writings were unsmirched by slang or *double entendre*: they were clean, clear and entertainingly written, and who shall measure the great influence of this dear old lady who, all alone, entertained the reading public of the great round world for more than half a century?

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In the days when Autograph Albums were popular, there was a much more ambitious "remembrance" album called "The Mental Photograph." Fortunately for us, Mrs. Southworth recorded in one of these her sentiments on various subjects, and it is to Mrs. Alice Underwood Hunt, her lifelong friend, we are indebted for this and other intimate sketches and incidents in the life of the great authoress:

MENTAL PHOTOGRAPH. E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.

What is your favorite color? Crimson.
What is your favorite flower? Moss Rose.
What is your favorite tree? Acacia.
What is your favorite object in Nature? The sun.
What is your favorite hour of the day? Sunrise.
What is your favorite season of the year? Summer.
What is your favorite perfume? The fragrance of living flowers.
What is your favorite gem? The ruby.
What is your favorite style of beauty? Intellectual and queenly.

What are your favorite names, male and female? Daniel and Augusta.

Who are your favorite painters? Rubens, Murillo and Rosa Bonheur.

Who are your favorite musicians? Hayden, Handel, Mozart and the birds of the air.

What is your favorite piece of sculpture? Ajax praying for light.

Your favorite poets? Byron, Whittier and Adelaide Proctor.

Your favorite authors? Victor Hugo and Walter Scott.

Your favorite character in romance? Jean Valjean.

Your favorite character in history? Robert Bruce.

Your favorite book to take up for an hour? Aesop's Fables.

What book, not religious, would you not part with, provided you could not secure another copy? Shakspeare.

What epoch would you have chosen to have lived in? The nineteenth century.

Where would you like to live? In the mountains near the sea.

What are your favorite amusements? Writing, reading, play-going.

What are your favorite occupations? Writing, sewing, almsgiving, worshipping.

What trait of character do you most admire in man? Magnanimity.

What trait of character do you most admire in woman? Devotion.

What trait do you most detest in each? Cruelty.

If not yourself, whom would you rather be? A queen regnant.

What is your idea of happiness? Power, beauty and the united circle.

What is your idea of misery? The opposite of the above.

What is your *bete noire*? Poverty.

What is your worst dream? (Nothing.)

What do you most dread? The loss of love and ideas.

What do you believe is your most distinguishing characteristic? The love for all creatures.

If married, what do you believe is the most distinguishing characteristic of your better-half? (She left no answer.)

What is the sublimest passion of which human nature is capable? Love of country.

What are the sweetest words in the world? Life, love, light, home, heaven and mother.

What are the saddest? Death, Hate, Blindness, Hell, Farewell.

What is your aim in life? To excel.

What do you desire for the future? Faith, Hope, Love.

Mrs. Southworth located in the villa on the Potomac in 1853. This is one of the most picturesque spots in Washington; from the veranda of the Cottage may be seen the winding, pearly Potomac, its palisades, and the wooded and beautifully colored foot-hills of Virginia. It was a place for romance and fine writing. The late Robert Bonner said it was one of the most picturesque places in all the world. He thought the scenery finer than that of the Hudson, or of the far-famed Rhine. She called her home Prospect Cottage. In earlier days when buildings were not so imposing as now, this Cottage was considered large; in fact, historians say it had been built for a hotel, but Mrs. Southworth bought it, remodeled it, and made it picturesquely beautiful. It has been one of the beauty spots of Washington and is certainly one of the most historical. The Arts Commission should consider it, in establishing the City Beautiful, and the City of Washington should ever preserve it as one of its greatest literary shrines. Many of the illustrious personages who helped to make this literary shrine famous, have gone into the Great Beyond, together with the dear soul who gave so much of her life to the great reading public. Mrs. Southworth was endeared to Prospect Cottage, and no amount of money would ever induce her to part with it. She bought the Cottage so that she might not be annoyed with the noise of the city; but the city and its commerce has pushed its way to the very doorstep of Prospect Cottage. What will be its future? Let us preserve this literary landmark

for the pride of the city, and the good of coming generations.

And, it was in Prospect Cottage that the great, gifted authoress breathed her last: from Prospect Cottage her remains were borne to picturesque Oak Hill, Oak Hill that came into prominence, on account of being the last resting-place of John Howard Payne. Payne was also a great friend of Mrs. Southworth.

In 1899, the last year of Mrs. Southworth's life, the summer weather was exceedingly warm, the heat had a disastrous effect upon her, and from that dated her fatal illness. She suffered no special ailment. Her life was as a clock run down. And on Friday, June 30, 1899, at eight o'clock in the evening, just as the twilight shadows closed the last day of summer, and night spread its shadowy pinions over the Potomac, Mrs. Southworth passed into the Great Beyond. Her going out was so gradual that the careful watchers by her bedside did not realize for a few moments that she had passed away. She had faithfully finished her work: she had lived nearly ten years beyond the allotted "three-score and ten" set by the Psalmist. She left us so quietly. Then came the sorrowing news: from Prospect Cottage the message was taken up and flashed over the telegraph wires from coast to coast: "Mrs. Southworth is dead." It was a message of personal bereavement to the thousands upon thousands of her readers who knew her and who loved her. The cables took up the message and it went around the world: the whole great round world had lost its Princess of Entertainers! The world's readers suffered an irreparable loss, and knew it!

She had always been accustomed to closing her week's work on Friday afternoon. And on that quiet, mid-summer Friday night, much like the clock run down, that stops ticking, she simply stopped breathing.



FRONT VIEW OF PROSPECT COTTAGE, 1890.



SIDE VIEW OF PROSPECT COTTAGE, WHEN OCCUPIED BY MRS. SOUTHWORTH, 1890.

Her remains lay in state several days in her beloved library in the northeast corner room of Prospect Cottage. Her friends, people of all ages and from all stations of life, people whom she had loved and helped, came to pay tribute of respect to their beloved friend. She was no believer in *caste*. She had been the friend to humanity. Late on the Sabbath evening, four tiny, timid little girls asked to be admitted to pay their last respects to their departed friend and benefactress. No one in attendance knew them. The children placed a small bouquet of roses on the casket; then the four knelt, two on each side of the casket, and said the prayer of the Angelical Salutation. This ended, they as silently withdrew. She had been their friend.

For many years Mrs. Southworth had been a communicant of the Episcopal church, but in the last years of her life, I am told by Judge Job Barnard, that she became a member of the Washington Society of the New Jerusalem (Swedenborgian or New Church) in 1883, and remained a consistent member until her death; she often attended meetings for worship, and had social meetings at Prospect Cottage, many of which Judge Barnard said he attended. Her funeral services were conducted by the Rev. Frank Sewall, in the chapel in Oak Hill Cemetery.

Mrs. Southworth left two children, Mrs. James Valentine Lawrence of New York and Dr. Richmond J. Southworth; she left a number of very interesting relatives, but space forbids the listing of names.

Peace to the memory of the great princess of Prospect Cottage! She left the world a rich heritage.